

REMARKS***Summary of the Response***

Upon entry of the instant amendment, claims 18 and 21 will have been amended and claims 15 – 17, 19, 20, and 22 – 24 will have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Moreover, Applicants expressly reserve the right to refile the subject matter of the canceled claims in one or more continuation applications. Accordingly, claims 1 – 14, 18, 21, and 25 – 30 currently remain pending.

Summary of the Official Action

In the instant Office Action, the Examiner has indicated claims 1 – 14 and 25 – 30 are allowed, and claims 18 and 21 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if presented in independent forms that include all the features of their base claims. However, the Examiner has rejected claims 15 – 17, 19, 20, and 22 – 24 over the art of record. By the present amendment and remarks, Applicants submit that the rejections have been rendered moot, and respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application.

Acknowledgment of Allowable Claims and Subject Matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 1 – 14 and 25 – 30 are allowed, and that claims 18 and 21 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if presented in independent forms that include all the features of their base claims.

Moreover, as Applicants have presented claims 18 and 21 in independent and allowable form, the Examiner is requested to additionally indicate the allowance of claims 18 and 21 in next official communication.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) is Moot

Applicants traverse the rejection of claims 15 – 17, 19, 20, and 22 – 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by PEREIRA et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,831,850) [hereinafter "PEREIRA"]. The Examiner asserts PEREIRA shows all claimed features of the identified claims and notes column 2, lines 23 – 43. Applicants traverse the Examiner's assertions.

While Applicants do not acquiesce that claims 15 – 17, 19, 20, and 22 – 24 are anticipated by PEREIRA, in an effort to advance prosecution, these rejected claims have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering the instant application allowable.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the pending rejection and allowance of the application and pending claims is respectfully requested.

Application is Allowable

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that each and every pending claim of the present invention meets the requirements for patentability under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103, and respectfully request the Examiner to indicate allowance of each and every pending claim of the present invention.

Authorization to Charge Deposit Account

The undersigned authorizes the charging of any necessary fees, including any extensions of time fees required to place the application in condition for allowance by Examiner's Amendment, to Deposit Account No. 09 - 0456 in order to maintain pendency of this application.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that none of the references of record, either taken alone or in any proper combination thereof, anticipate or render obvious the Applicants' invention, as recited in each of claims 1 - 30. The applied reference of record has been discussed and distinguished, while significant claimed features of the present invention have been pointed out.

Accordingly, reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application and all the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,
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